

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 747

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LIMA 5813

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PE

SUBJ: APRA AND THE GOP, AN UNDERSTANDING IN THE MAKING?

REF: LIMA 5742

1. SUMMARY. IN A JUNE 28 MILITARY CEREM NY, PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ EMPHASIZED TO THE PERUVIAN PUBLIC -- AND TO HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES IN PARTICULAR -- THAT HE HAS NO POLITICAL AMBITIONS. HIS ASSURANCES COME IN THE WAKE OF CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION ABOUT AN APRA - GOP PACT FOR THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY THAT WOULD "LEGITIMIZE" MORALES BERMUDEZ AS PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT. THE SPECULATIONS ARE NOT NEW, BUT HAVE BEEN GIVEN NEW LIGHT BY A WIDELY-PUBLICIZED MEETING BETWEEN APRA'S HAYA DE LA TORRE AND THE PRESIDENT'S SON. WHILE A FORMAL AGREEMENT APPEARS UNLIKELY, AND THE "LEGITIMIZATION" OF THE PRESIDENT EVEN MORE SO, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT HISTORY HAS BROUGHT APRA AND THE ARMED FORCES TOGETHER IN A COINCIDENCE OF INTERESTS. END.

2. UNDOUBTEDLY PROVOKED BY SEVERAL ARTICLES IN RECENT NUMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINES, PRESIDENT MORALES EMPHATICALLY DENIED ANY PAST OR FUTURE POLITICAL AMBITIONS IN A WELL-PUBLICIZED MILITARY CEREMONY ON JUNE 28. HE
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ASSURED HIS AUDIENCE AT A CEREMONY HONORING THE ARMY SIGNAL CORPS THAT HIS POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITIES WILL END AS SOON AS HE COMPLETES THE MISSION CONFERRED ON HIM BY THE ARMED FORCES (I.E. RETURN TO CIVILIAN CONSTITUTIONAL RULE BY 1980 AS OUTLINED IN TUPAC AMARU).

3. SPECULATION ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S ALLEGED POLITICAL

AMBITIONS AND SPECIFICALLY ABOUT HIS PRESUMED INTEREST IN HAVING THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY "LEGITIMIZE" HIM AS PRO-VISIONAL PRESIDENT HAS BEEN RIFE FOR SOME TIME AND MAY WELL HAVE HAD SOME BASIS IN FACT EARLIER IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. RUMORS ABOUT SOME SORT OF APRA-GOP PACT HAVE ALSO BEEN MAKING THE ROUNDS. APRA'S GOOD NATIONAL SHOWING IN THE JUNE 18 ELECTIONS HAS FUELED SPECULATIONS ABOUT A PACT EITHER WITH OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES OR WITH THE GOP GIVING RISE TO CONSIDERABLE COMMENTARY IN THE INDEPENDENT MAGAZINES, THE MOST NOTABLE OF WHICH IS AN EXTENSIVE ARTICLE IN THE POPULAR WEEKLY "OIGA" REPORTING ON A JUNE 21 MEETING BETWEEN APRA'S HAYA DE LA TORRE AND THE PRESIDENT'S SON REMIGIO MORALES BERMUDEZ PEDRAGLIO (RMB). ON HIS TRIUMPHAL RETURN TO LIMA (AFTER VOTING IN TRUJILLO) HAYA WAS MET AT PARTY HEADQUARTERS BY RMB. "OIGA'S" FRONT PAGE CARRIES A LARGE PHOTO OF THE TWO EMBRACING AND THE CAPTION "THE HAYA-MORALES EMBRACE -- FAREWELL TO THE REVOLUTIONARY JUNTA?" THE COVER STORY, WHICH APRA'S ANDRES TOWNSEND CHARACTERIZED TO EMBOFF AS "ILL-INTENTIONED", IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN INTERVIEW OF RMB IN WHICH HE DENIES AN APRA - GOP PACT, BUT LEAVES SOME LINGERING DOUBTS.

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4. THE "OIGA" COVER STORY NOTES THAT DESPITE PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ' JUNE 23 DECLARATION TO THE EFFECT THAT THE GOP "WILL NOT INTERFERE" IN THE FREE FUNCTIONING OF THE ASSEMBLY, ALL SIGNS POINT TO AN APRA-GOP PACT DESIGNED TO INSURE THE CONTINUITY OF THE REVOLUTION AND GUARANTEE THAT THE ASSEMBLY DOESN'T DEVIATE FROM ITS OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED TASK OF WRITING A NEW CONSTITUTION. SUCH A PACT COULD INCLUDE THE "LEGITIMIZATION" OF MORALES BERMUDEZ. "OIGA" POINTS TO EXAGGERATED

PRAISE OF APRA CANDIDATES AND ATTACKS ON PPC IN THE GOP - CONTROLLED PRESS, AS WELL AS EVIDENCE OF GOP EFFORTS TO DISSUADE APRA FROM MAKING ALLIANCES WITH THE PPC OR FROM ENDORSING BEDOYA'S CALL TO CONVERT THE ASSEMBLY INTO A REGULAR CONGRESS. THE CONVER ARTICLE QUOTES A RECENT "CARETAS" PIECE TO THE EFFECT THAT THE GOP NEEDS APRA AS A STRONG, MODERATE AND IDEOLOGICALLY COMPATIBLE "LOYAL OPPOSITION." "OIGA" NOTES THAT WHILE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD ASSURE A SMOOTHER TRANSITION, IT CARRIES WITH IT THE GRAVE RISK OF AN "ANTI-DEMOCRATIC" APRA POLITICAL HEGEMONY. INSTEAD OF INTRIGUES BETWEEN THE PALACE AND APRA HEADQUARTERS, "OIGA" CALLS FOR LIBERTY, POLITICAL PLURALITY AND A BROADLY-BASED AGREEMENT TO CONFRONT THE OVERRIDING ECONOMIC CRISIS.

5. BOTH PUBLICLY, AND IN PERSONAL ASSURANCES TO EMBOFFS, CONFIDENTIAL

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APRA HAS DENIED ITS INTENTION TO FORM A PACT WITH THE GOP OR TO ENDORSE MORALES BERMUDEZ AS PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT. THE PRESIDENT'S SON, IN THE "OIGA" INTERVIEW ALSO REJECTS THE IDEA BUT PERHAPS NOT ENTIRELY. RMB RESPONDED TO "OIGA'S" QUESTION ABOUT AN APRA-GOP "UNDERSTANDING" BY SAYING THAT GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES HE WOULD BE THE LAST PERSON TO SPECULATE ON SUCH AN AGREEMENT. HE PRAISED THE GOP FOR ITS NEUTRALITY THROUGHOUT THE ELECTION PROCESS AND SAID THAT RATHER THAN POLITICAL PACTS, PRESENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES CALLED FOR DIALOGUE. HE ADDED THAT AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOP AND ONE SPECIFIC PARTY WOULD BE WRONG. ASKED IF A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND APRA WAS BEING FORGED, RMB HEDGED, SAYING THAT THE RECONCILIATION WAS "BETWEEN THE ARMED FORCES AND THE...PEOPLE". FINALLY, RMB REFERRED TO THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A NATIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC COUNCIL COMPOSED OF PARTY REPRESENTATIVES IN THE SAME PROPORTION AS THE JUNE 18 VOTE TO ACT AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE ASSEMBLY AND THE GOP, PRIMARILY IN THE FORMULATION OF ECONOMIC POLICY. PRIME MINISTER MOLINA HAS DISCUSSED THIS IDEA WITH BEDOYA AND OTHERS (REFTEL). ACCORDING TO CARLOS ROCA CACERES, HOWEVER, THE SCHEME ORIGINATED WITH RMB, WHO DISCUSSED IT WITH FRIENDS IN APRA AND THEN APPROACHED MOLINA WITH THE IDEA.

6. OTHER OBSERVERS HAVE ALSO INTERPRETED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE AN UNDERSTANDING IF NOT AN AGREEMENT, BETWEEN APRA AND THE GOP. LEFTIST "MARKA" POINTS TO THE HAYA-RMB MEETING AS EVIDENCE OF AND INCIPIENT PACT, CALLING RMB "AN APRISTA WITH ONE FOOT IN THE PALACE AND ONE IN THE CASA DEL PUEBLO."

OF ALL THE PARTIES IN THE PRESENT SPECTRUM, "MARKA"

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SEES THE GREATEST DOCTRINARY COINCIDENCE BETWEEN APRA
AND THE GOP.

7. COMMENT.THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN APRA'S LONG-
STANDING POLITICAL PROGRAM AND THE REFORMS ENACTED BY
THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS WELL-DOCUMENTED. WE SEE
GROWING EVIDENCE THAT BOTH PARTIES TO A LONG, BITTER
DISPUTE HAVE MADE STRIDES TOWARD BURYING THE HATCHET.
THE MILITARY INSTITUTION THAT ONCE ACTED AS THE OLD-
TIME OLIGARCHY'S BULWARK AGAINST THE RABID APRA HOARDS,
AND THE PARTY WHOSE OBJECTIVES SEEMED, IN THE CONTEXT
OF A MARKEDLY DIFFERENT PERU, TO BE A SERIOUS THREAT TO
THE ESTABLISHED ORDER, ARE CLOSER NOW THAN THEY HAVE
EVER BEEN. THIS RAPPROACHMENT CAN BE ATTRIBUTED IN
PART TO THE FACT THAT THE ARMED FORCES, BEGINNING IN
1968, AWOKE TO THE DANGER OF SOCIAL DISINTEGRATION
FACING PERU AND TO THE ROLE THAT THEY, AS THE NATION'S
BEST ORGANIZED AND BEST DISCIPLINED POLITICAL FORCE,
MUST PLAY IN ACHIEVING NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND SOCIO-
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IT CAN ALSO BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE
FACT THAT MUCH OF PERUVIAN SOCIETY HAS FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO
HAYA DE LA TORRE'S VISION OF HALF A CENTURY AGO, AND
THAT THE RADICAL FIRE BRAND OF THE 1920'S AND 30'S
HAS BECOME RESPECTABLE TODAY, ESPECIALLY IN COMPARISON
TO THE EXTREME LEFT ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE. THIS
CONVERGENCE OF IDEALS AND PURPOSES NOT WITHSTANDING,
AND IN SPITE OF THE RECENT FLURRY OF SPECULATION, WE
DO NOT ANTICIPATE ANY FORMAL APRA-GOP PACT IN THE
ASSEMBLY TO BE CONVENED ON JULY 28. THE PRESIDENT'S
JUNE 29 COMMENTS, THEN, WERE DESIGNED NOT ONLY TO OFFSET
PUBLIC SPECULATION ABOUT SUCH A DEAL BUT TO REAFFIRM
TO HIS MILITARY COLLEAGUES (WHO OPPOSE HIS "LEGITIMIZATION"
BY THE ASSEMBLY) THAT HE IS NOT PLAYING GAMES WITH APRA.
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